

TO THE PUBLIC.

It is a well-known fact that a difficulty occurred between Brigadier-General N. G. Evans and myself, at Kinston, (N. C.) in December, 1862; after which various charges and specifications were preferred by Gen. Evans against me.

I have stood the ordeal of a trial, and as yet final action has not been had on the decision of the Court.

Various rumors are in circulation, well-calculated to seriously affect my character at home and at a distance. It therefore becomes my duty, in advance of the final action on the case, to present some of the testimony in my behalf, in order to arrest erroneous statements, busily disseminated, until the matter is finally disposed of, or till such time as I can be able to lay the whole record before an impartial public.

With those who are conversant with the whole affair, I am fully exculpated from any blame, and I can confidently appeal to them at all times to sustain me.

The difficulty originated in this way: The forces engaged on Sunday at Kinston had been ordered to fall back across the Neuse River by Gen. Evans, and after the most of them had crossed, Lieut. Corrie, of Gen. Evans' Staff, rode up and said that the General ordered the forces to return to the opposite side, (the side next to the enemy.) I believed, from Lieut. Corrie's appearance, actions and conduct, that he was drunk; and, as the order was an unreasonable one, could not think such an order was given. Whereupon I said to Lieut. Corrie, "Go, bring Gen. Evans here, and if he orders me, I will go, be he drunk or sober."

He returned, and in a few moments brought Gen. Evans. I was at once placed in arrest, and the order to recross was

immediately countermanded, and our forces retreated in the direction of Goldsboro.

Gen. Evans, in his testimony on the trial, said his forces did not amount to more than *two thousand*, and that of the enemy to *twenty-two thousand infantry and seventy-two pieces of artillery*.

I am thus explicit in showing the beginning of the difficulty, in order that the reader may understand the application of the testimony I will here introduce.

Major HILTON, of the 22d S. C. Regiment, witness in behalf of the Defendant:

Question—Could the said order have been executed at the time it was given, or at any time before it was countermanded?

Answer—No; it could not have been done.

Question—If it had been executed, would it not have probably caused the loss of the Regiment and the whole Brigade? If yea, state your reasons.

Answer—If it had been executed, the whole Brigade would have either been killed or captured. Could not have taken any position at all.

Question—State whether Lieut. Corrie was drunk or sober on that day. If drunk, state your reasons for so supposing.

Answer—I think he was drunk. He reeled on his horse; his face was red; thick tongued, and actions generally that of a drunken man.

Question—State your opinion as to my conduct in the battle at Kinston, and whether you saw in me any evidences of fear.

Answer—Conduct good. Saw no fear in you; was calm and cool all the time.

Question—State on what other occasion you have seen me under fire; the circumstances; my conduct; the opinion of our own and other officers in respect thereto; and my general reputation as a man of courage.

Answer—Saw Col. Goodlett at Secessionville, Rappahannock, (Va.) At Kinston, Saturday evening, the 13th December, led charge on horseback; you were in front some fifteen or twenty paces. At Rappahannock charged on foot about one thousand yards, in face of heavy artillery fire. The Col-

onel was some fifteen or twenty paces in advance, urging on the men. The Colonel's reputation as a man of courage is as good as any man's. Never heard it doubted. Have heard officers in other regiments speak in high terms of his conduct at Rappahannock.

Captain J. M. PICKENS, Co. G. 22d S. C. Regiment, examined on part of Defendant:

Question—What was my conduct during the Battle of Kingston? Did you see any evidences of fear in me?

Answer—Showed remarkable coolness and fearlessness; remained most of the time on horseback; led Regiment on horseback.

Question—What is my general reputation as a man of courage?

Answer—So far as I know, as good as any officer I am acquainted with.

Sergeant-Major G. B. LAKE, 22d S. C. Regiment, examined on part of Defendant:

Question—If said order had been executed, what would have been the probable result.

Answer—Regiment would have been captured or killed if it had recrossed bridge. Enemy were off some three hundred yards, advancing in heavy column, and artillery was soon placed in position which commanded the bridge.

Question—Did you ever see me under fire on other occasions? If so, describe the circumstances, and my conduct; what was said about it by the officers of our Regiment and others.

Answer—Saw Col. Goodlett under fire at Rappahannock, six or eight hours; was very cool and self-possessed; so much so that it was the subject of remark, not only in our Regiment, but in others. One position, where men were concealed and protected from the fire, Col. Goodlett was standing up watching the movements of the enemy, exposed all the while to a severe fire of shot and shell. That day the Colonel led charge some distance ahead of the Regiment. At Secessionville, the Colonel behaved with great coolness; and the evening the 47th Georgia Regiment was cut up so, on James' Island, he was under heavy fire, and acted with his usual coolness.

Question—Did you witness my conduct on Saturday evening of the Kinston fight? Describe it; what was generally said about it?

Answer—Colonel led the charge, some twenty or thirty paces ahead of the Regiment on horseback, under a heavy fire; was as cool as on other occasions. Heard officers and men speak in terms of praise that night of the Colonel.

Question—What evidences of fear did you see in me in the fight on Sunday at Kinston?

Answer—Saw no evidences of fear whatever.

Question—What is my present reputation as a man of courage?

Answer—All I have ever heard say anything about you, say you are a brave man.

Question—What was the condition of Lieut. Corrie on Sunday of Kinston fight?

Answer—I thought him drunk. He acted like a drunken man; reeled on his horse; speech not as it should have been; acted every way like a drunken man.

Major J. R. CULP, 17th S. C. Regiment, witness in behalf of Defendant:

Question—Did you see me under fire on the Rappahannock? What was my conduct on that occasion? What has generally been said respecting it?

Answer—I saw you under fire there, and was impressed with your coolness particularly. Your conduct was not only unexceptionable, but in the highest degree commendable. I have often heard it spoken of, not only by the officers of my Regiment, but by those of the whole Brigade. The situation at the Rappahannock was one of the most trying I have been in. We had to look danger in the face, and be shot at by artillery. I have never seen a man exhibit more coolness on any occasion than Col. Goodlett did there.

Question—What is my present reputation as a man of courage?

Answer—Never heard a man doubt it; is as good as any man in the Brigade.

Captain W. H. EDWARDS, 17th S. C. Regiment, witness for Defendant:

Question—Did you witness my conduct on the Rappahan-

nock? If so, describe it, and state what was generally said about it.

Answer—Saw Col. Goodlett at Rappahannock; thought him as cool a man as was on the field. It was talked over after the fight as to his coolness. I was very near him greater portion of the time; heard him talk to Colonel Gadberry and other members of the Brigade, under severe fire of shot, shell and shrapnel. It was as severe a position as the Brigade has ever been in.

Question—What is my present reputation as a man of courage?

Answer—I have never heard it doubted. Reputation in Brigade good.

Question—Did you see Lieut. Corrie at any time during the fight at Kinston on the 14th December. Was he drunk or sober? Describe his actions and mode of speech.

Answer—When I first saw him he was evidently under the influence of liquor. From his manner, conversation and countenance, I know he was either under the influence of liquor or its equivalent.

Question—Did the 17th S. C. Regiment recross the river when ordered?

Answer—Did not recross. Order was countermanded by Gen. Evans before Regiment recrossed Bridge.

Lieutenant D. J. LOGAN, Co. F, 17th S. C. Regiment, witness on part of Defendant:

Question—Did you see me under fire on the Rappahannock? What was my conduct on the occasion, and what was generally said respecting it?

Answer—I did. Conduct for courage was as good as it could be. Your bearing was calculated to inspire every one around you with the same conduct and confidence. It has been the subject of remark amongst the officers of my Regiment. Heard them speak in the highest terms of it.

Question—What is my present reputation as a man of courage?

Answer—Good, sir. Never heard it impeached by any one.

I could introduce the testimony of sixteen other witnesses from the 22d S. C. Regiment, all testifying to my conduct in every engagement I have been in with the Regiment; but I do not deem it necessary, as the reader must be perfectly satis-

fied, that no imputation whatever can be thrown upon my character as a man of courage.

I will now introduce the testimony of Dr. W. P. HOOPER, 41st Regiment N. C. Cavalry, who acted in the capacity of Courier to General Evans during the fight at Kinston. Examined on behalf of Defendant:

Question—Did you notice Lieut. Corrie on Sunday of the fight at Kinston? Was he drunk or sober? If you think he was drunk, please state your reasons fully.

Answer—Lieut. Corrie was drunk; had been with him all day, and carried liquor for him. He drank liquor enough to make him drunk. He *ranted, reeled*, and could scarcely sit in the saddle. Had two bottles of liquor; large black bottles; held over a quart each.

Question—About how much, in your judgment, did Lieut. Corrie drink?

Answer—Drank more than Gen. Evans. Only two drinks were given out in the morning, and about two left in the evening. Lieut. Corrie and Gen. Evans drank the balance. Lieut. Corrie called for the bottle every time he met me.

Question—Did you hear Gen. Evans say anything respecting my conduct on Saturday evening of the fight at Kinston? If so, state it.

Answer—Heard Gen. Evans speak of the charge Col. Goodlett made Saturday evening, several times on his way back to Kinston, and that night and next morning. He said that Col. Goodlett had driven the enemy back, etc., and frequently said that Col. Goodlett was a noble fellow. Spoke in the highest terms of Col. Goodlett.

Question—What do you think would have been the result if the order to recross the Bridge had been executed?

Answer—If they had recrossed, the Brigade would have been either killed or captured.

By the introduction of the testimony of Dr. FLEMING, Surgeon of the 22d S. C. Regiment, I will show the reason why I did not participate in the battles of the first Maryland campaign.

I left Charleston, S. C., on the 10th August, 1862, in feeble health, and the continuous marches and excessive fatigues

overcame me and threw me into fever when I reached Dranesville, (Va.)

Question—Do you know why I did not go into the Maryland campaign? Where did you last see me before that campaign, and what was my condition?

Answer—I left Col. Goodlett sick at Dranesville, (Va.) about the 1st September, 1862. He was quite sick from affection of the liver. I advised him to remain behind and go to a private house in the country.

Question—Where and when did you next see me? What was my condition then?

Answer—Next saw you on Opequan Creek, near Shepards-town, (Va.) about the last of September; had the appearance of a man that had been very sick.

Question—How long did I remain with the Regiment at that time? Why did I leave it?

Answer—Did not remain long with Regiment; left at Winchester to go to private house. Had two chills before you left, and was in a senseless condition when you left camp. Chills were of a congestive type, and you were suffering from diseased liver.

Question—Have you ever heard my conduct on the Rapahannock spoken of? If so, what was generally said about it?

Answer—I have heard that Col. Goodlett behaved with remarkable coolness and gallantry, both in and out of the Regiment.

Question—What is my present reputation as a man of courage?

Answer—I don't think your courage is doubted at all.

I am willing to throw the record in my case before the public, and it is my intention to do so as soon as my friends deem it proper. It covers some two hundred pages of closely written foolscap, accompanied with a map giving the location of the field of battle and all the points of interest.

To my friends in the army and at home I can say of a truth, that I have been most cruelly, bitterly and vindictively persecuted. The principal witnesses against me are my bitterest enemies, and were directly or indirectly interested in having me removed from office. I have severely commented

upon them in my final defence and statements before the Court, and I am satisfied that the testimony sustains me in all I say of them.

As regards the attempted censure of the Court of Inquiry at Goldsboro, (N. C.) in the case of Gen. Evans, I have to say that I was not a witness in the case, as I had unkind feelings towards him.

There is not a particle of testimony in said case upon which the Court could base an opinion as to the motives that induced me to prefer charges against Gen. Evans.

Feeling that I have not done anything that will reflect upon my character as a gentleman, I respectfully ask my friends to bear with me patiently, with the assurance that in due time all will be well.

S. D. GOODLETT.

Greenville, S. C., May, 1864.

